

# Who is Kogito Choko in the Novels of Kenzaburo Ōe?: Allowing “The Child” to Speak as an Author’s Introspection

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**Abstract**—Kenzaburo Ōe became Japan’s second Nobel Prize winner for Literature. He is one of the several postwar authors who wrote stories about disaffection, loss of purpose, and trauma. Kogito Choko is a character in two novels of Ōe, “Changeling” (2000) and “Death by Water” (2009). This study re-examined who “Kogito Choko” is and how he relates to the introspection of Kenzaburo Ōe. This study is qualitative and used content analysis as a method. The researcher purposively selected the novels of Ōe; the researcher used Caroline Myss’ concept of “Child” for the data analysis. The researcher used Formalism to characterize Kogito and further employed the Psychoanalysis Approach to analyze Kogito in each novel and find his struggles. Based on the study, Kogito is a child archetype. According to Myss (2020), the mature personality of the Child archetype nurtures that part of us that yearns to be lighthearted and innocent, expecting the wonders of tomorrow, regardless of age. This aspect of human nature significantly contributes to our ability to sense playfulness in our lives, thereby balancing the seriousness of adult responsibilities. In *Changeling*, the survival archetype Kogito represents is the *Dependent Child*. He is in a way that, even before they grew up, he has always been dependent on Goro. He was able to experience things that he could not do alone. In *Death by Water*, Kogito is a *Wounded Child*. Although parental figures did not physically wound Kogito, he was emotionally tormented by the death of his father and the truth that was withheld from him. Not until his old age did, he learned that there was nothing more than the suicide of his father. Far from his expectations of a heroic father. His being a wounded child also led him to help another wounded character from the novel. Kogito is an introspective instrument of Ōe’s deepening of the theme in his novels. Only Ōe, intentionally or not, sketched carefully Kogito to unpredictably predict the trajectory of the plots in his two novels and how characters react naturally.

**Keywords**—characters in fiction, Kenzaburo Ōe, author’s introspection, psychoanalysis

## I. INTRODUCTION

Who is the author, or what is the author? The role and function of the author in a text remains a debate among the literary circles. In the traditional view, the author is the creator and the ultimate source of meaning, while in the postmodernist view, the author is dead (as Roland Barthes would put it) and the author is less a person and more of a cultural construct that organizes texts and discourse (or author-function, according to Michel Foucault). There is also a view that considers the Author as the Alter Ego or Character in the work of fiction. Many novelists place versions inside their fiction, like in the novels of Kenzaburo Ōe.

Kenzaburo Ōe, who also became Japan’s second Nobel Prize for Literature. He grew up in war. Since his childhood, he experienced the nation’s myth and history as well as those

of the village tradition and its conflicting notions. Young Ōe took democracy straight to his heart. His novels, essays, and short fiction grapple with existential questions, political engagement, and the responsibilities of the writer in society. Much of the critical discourse on Ōe centers on his autobiographical alter ego, Kogito Chōko, who recurs in late works like ‘Changeling’ (2000) and ‘Death by Water’ (2009). Scholars have examined Ōe through lenses of trauma studies, disability studies, postwar Japanese history, and literary modernism.

The writing prowess of Ōe as an author has been cemented in his use of ‘Kogito’ as an important character. Using the lens of psychoanalysis, the text and subtext of Ōe’s works reveal the complexity of the voice that the author himself wanted to convey. This study re-examined who “Kogito Choko” is and how he relates to the introspection of Kenzaburo Ōe using Caroline Myss’ concept of “The Child”. Kogito Choko is a character in two novels of Ōe, “The Changeling” (2000) and “Death by Water” (2009).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Kenzaburo Ōe

Kenzaburo Ōe, a Japanese literary figure was born in 1935, in a village hemmed in by the forests of Shikoku, one of the four main islands of Japan. His family had lived in the village tradition for several hundred years, and no one in the Ōe clan had ever left the village in the valley. Even after Japan embarked on modernization soon after the Meiji Restoration, and it became customary for young people in the provinces to leave their native place for Tokyo or the other large cities, the Ōes remained in Ōse-mura [1].

The Second World War broke out when Ōe was six. Militaristic education extended to every nook and cranny of the country, the Emperor as both monarch and deity reigning over its politics and its culture. Young Ōe, therefore, experienced the nation’s myth and history as well as those of the village tradition, and these dual experiences were often in conflict. After his father’s death during the war, his mother took over his father’s role as an educator. The books she bought him—*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Strange Adventures of Nils Holgersson*—have left him with an impression he says, ‘he will carry to the grave [1].’

Ōe first attracted attention on the literary scene with *Shisha no ogori* (1957; *Lavish Are the Dead*), published in the magazine *Bungakukai*. His literary output was, however, uneven. His first novel, *Memushiri kouchi* (1958; *Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids*), was highly praised, and he won a major literary award, the Akutagawa Prize, for *Shiiku* (1958; *The Catch*). But his second novel, *Warera no jidai* (1959;

“Our Age”), was poorly received, as his contemporaries felt that Ōe was becoming increasingly preoccupied with social and political criticism [1].

Crisis struck Ōe’s life and literature with the birth of his first son, Hikari. Hikari was born with a cranial deformity resulting in his becoming a mentally handicapped person. Traumatic as the experience was for Ōe, the crisis granted him a new lease on both his life and his literature. Overcoming the agony and determined to coexist with the child, Ōe wrote *A Personal Matter* (1964), the penance of his pain in accepting the brain-damaged child into his life, and of how he arrived at his resolve to live with him. Through the catalytic medium of humanism, he conjoined his own fate of having to accept a handicapped child into the family with that of the stance one ought to take in contemporary society and wrote *Hiroshima Notes* (1965), a long essay that describes the realities and thoughts of the A-bomb victims [1].

Ōe continued to investigate the problems of characters who feel alienated from establishment conformity and the materialism of postwar Japan’s consumer-oriented society. Among his later works were the novel *Man’en gannen no futtōbōru* (1967; *The Silent Cry*), a collection of short fiction entitled *Warera no kyōki o ikinobiru michi o oshieyo* (1969; *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness*), and the novels *Pinchi rannā chōsho* (1976; *The Pinch Runner Memorandum*) and *Dōjidai gēmu* (1979; “*Coeval Games*”) [1].

Ōe based these novellas on actual political events and enraged the right-wing traditionalists with his depiction of a boy committing a terrorist act in the name of the Emperor. When he bowed to pressure from the right and pulled back the circulation of the sequel, Japanese leftists were enraged as well. Ōe found himself receiving threats from both sides. Despite his interest in political and social critique, Ōe also has a strong inclination to delve into his personal life in his fiction. Ōe continues to write semi-autobiographically in novels such as *The Pinch Runner Memorandum* (1976) and *A Quiet Life* (1990) [2].

Ōe’s fiction flies in the face of conformity and celebrates outcasts from society’s margins. Ōe’s embrace of his handicapped son went against mainstream Japanese society, which looked down upon the handicapped. In a country where such people are often institutionalized, Ōe chose to proudly stand by his son. His writing reflects this, as he made Hikari the subject of many books. Beyond Hikari, his novels and stories are full of other outcast-type characters. The heroes of Ōe’s books are those who challenge authority and refuse to conform [2].

Ōe’s winning the Nobel Prize for 1994 has thus encouraged him to embark on his pursuit of a new form of literature and a new life for himself.

### **Psychoanalysis on Japanese Literature**

The history of psychoanalysis in Japan may be roughly divided into two periods: (1) the period before World War II and (2) the period from the end of World War II to the present. The first Japanese document on psychoanalysis, an article by Kaison Ohtsuki titled “*The Psychology of Forgetfulness*,” appeared in a journal of psychological research in 1912. The same year, Kyuichi Kimura published “*How to Detect the Secrets of the Mind and to Discover Repression*,” which introduced psychoanalysis as a scientific method of exploring people’s thoughts. From 1929 to 1933, two collections of

Freud’s works appeared in Japanese translation. Both were the work of a group headed by literary figures Kenji Ohtsuki and Yaekichi Yabe. In the domain of Japanese psychiatry and medicine, Freudian psychoanalysis was originally dismissed as a misguided theory of pansexualism. Kiyoyasu Marui became the first Japanese psychiatrist to study psychoanalysis as a theoretical system of psychopathology [3].

The end of World War II brought an influx of learning and culture from the United States, which greatly influenced all aspects of Japanese society, including the field of psychiatry. It created a generation of young psychiatrists who sought to study the model of American dynamic psychiatry. A group of psychiatrists who studied under Heisaku Kosawa became the second generation of Japanese psychoanalysts, known as the Kosawa School. In 1969, following the death of Heisaku Kosawa, Michio Yamamura succeeded to the presidency of the Japan Psychoanalytic Society and the Japan Psychoanalytical Association. The period 1960-1970 also witnessed the return of several Japanese psychiatrists from clinical training abroad. Later, a new wave of psychiatrists—who might be called the fourth generation—joined the established psychiatric community. As to studies by leading Japanese psychoanalysts frequently cited in overseas literature [3].

### **The Archetypes of Survival by Caroline Myss**

Because human nature is so complex and ranges across so many epochs and cultures, there are literally hundreds of different subconscious archetypes available. As typically only carry a handful during one’s life, these help to define the outer personality as well as the course of life. As originally proposed in C. G. Jung’s work, and further delineated by Caroline Myss [4], among the many different combinations of archetypal selves that one may carry at any one time, there are four that are always common to everyone—the archetypes of survival: Victim, Saboteur, Prostitute, and Child. [5]

The Child, Victim, Prostitute, and Saboteur are all deeply involved in the most pressing challenges related to survival. Each one represents different issues, fears, and vulnerabilities that are needed to confront and overcome as part of the Sacred Contract. These four archetypes are the so-called trusted allies, which can represent spiritual as well as material strengths. They can become the guardians and will preserve the integrity, refusing to let negotiate it away in the name of survival. Like all archetypes, their energies are essentially neutral, despite the negative connotations of their names [4].

Furthermore, C. G. Jung countered this view with his detailed map of the unconscious, spelling out the universal roles that all of us unwittingly play out, guided by archetypes or story models. In Jung’s psychological world, hidden forces can be positive or negative, and through personal evolution, even the darkest archetypes can be redeemed. This was ultimately a spiritual journey, and for that reason (and the fact that the Freudian model led to a very low rate of cures), Jungian archetypes have become popular for their spiritual significance [4].

According to Chopra [5], Caroline Myss further develops Jung’s ideas and combines an archetypal path for self-development with a method of personal insight and intuition. In particular, she describes four survival archetypes

whose presence in the subconscious is universal and crippling in their negative effects. However, through self-awareness, each of us can identify the repeated patterns in our lives that have been dominated and harmed by the survival archetypes. A path of personal evolution is distinctly marked out, and transformation becomes possible, not as a general, hazy belief but as new behavior and beliefs that redeem the archetype, making it a psychological ally instead of an enemy.

One of the four is “the child” archetype which can be experienced in a variety of ways including the: Wounded Child, Abandoned or Orphan Child, Dependent, Innocent, Nature, and Divine Child. The Child archetype resides in everyone and is the first archetype to identify, therefore it is the beginning point. This archetype sets up our earliest perceptions of life, safety, loyalty, and family and its core issue is dependency and responsibility [6].

The Child also establishes our perceptions of life, safety, nurture, loyalty, and family. Its many aspects include the Wounded Child, Abandoned or Orphan Child, Dependent, Innocent, Nature, and Divine Child. These energies may emerge in response to different situations in which one find oneself, yet the core issue of all the Child archetypes is dependency vs. responsibility: when to take responsibility, when to have a healthy dependency, when to stand up to the group, and when to embrace communal life. Each of the variants of the Child archetype is characterized by certain tendencies, including shadow tendencies [4].

#### **Author as an Alter Ego Character**

One of the most persistent questions in literary theory concerns the relationship between authors and their texts. While traditional criticism emphasized the author as the central authority, poststructuralist thought (e.g., Barthes, Foucault) destabilized this position. Yet, in modern and contemporary fiction, many writers have reintroduced themselves into their works, often through alter egos or surrogate characters. These figures function as masks, mirrors, or doubles that allow the author to explore personal, historical, or philosophical concerns while maintaining the fictional frame. [7]

Roland Barthes (1967) argued that meaning lies in the text and its readers, not the author’s biography or intentions, while Michel Foucault (1969) introduced the concept of author-function, suggesting that ‘the author’ is less a person than a cultural category that organizes interpretation. Also, Wayne Booth (1961) in his *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, explained his idea of the ‘implied author,’ a textual presence distinct from the real author, guiding tone and values in narrative.

Serge Doubrosky (1977) coined the term ‘autofiction’ studies, wherein it argues that to see the use of alter egos as narcissistic or self-indulgent, collapsing the boundary between art and autobiography, is different from its representation of a profound self-reflexive strategy, forcing readers to confront how fiction and reality intersect [8].

The author, as alter ego or character, reveals the ongoing negotiation between authorship, identity, and fictionality. Writers use fictional doubles to explore memory, trauma, and the act of writing itself. Far from undermining fiction, the presence of the author-character often deepens its self-awareness, transforming novels into sites where life and

literature converge. [8]

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is qualitative and used content analysis as a method. The researcher purposively selected the novels of Kenzaburo Ōe: *Changeling* (2000) and *Death by Water* (2009) since Kogito Choko is one of the main characters in both novels. Caroline Myss’ concept of “Child” is used for the data analysis as a researcher based on her *Survival Archetypes* theory. The researcher used Formalism [9] to characterize Kogito Choko and further employed the Psychoanalysis Approach to analyze Choko in each novel and find his struggles. Moreover, the researcher utilized the basic psychological approach to deepen the characterization through the characters’ speech/dialogue, action, introspection, and relationship.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It is interesting to note how one character written and created by one author be able to captivate and allure readers with its complexity and values. Kenzaburo Ōe made ‘Kogito Choko’ as one of his phenomenal characters that transcends and tells stories of grief, memory and friendship. Kogito Choko is the main character (protagonist) and considered by many as Ōe’s semi-autobiographical alter ego.

#### **Who is Kogito Choko?: The Dependent and the Wounded**

He is a Child. The child who voices the introspection of Kenzaburo Ōe.

According to Myss [4], the mature personality of the Child archetype nurtures that part of us that yearns to be lighthearted and innocent, expecting the wonders of tomorrow, regardless of age. This part of our nature contributes greatly to our ability to sense playfulness in our lives, balancing the seriousness of adult responsibilities. The Child also establishes our perceptions of life, safety, nurture, loyalty, and family. Its many aspects include the Wounded Child, Abandoned or Orphan Child, Dependent, Innocent, Nature, and Divine Child. These energies may emerge in response to different situations in which one finds oneself, yet the core issue of all the Child archetypes is dependency vs. responsibility: when to take responsibility, when to have a healthy dependency, when to stand up to the group, and when to embrace communal life.

#### *A. Dependent Child: Kogito Choko in “Changeling” (2000)*

The first Kogito is the Needy or Dependent Child who carries a heavy feeling inside that nothing is ever enough, and is always seeking to replace something lost in childhood, although exactly what is never clear. The Dependent Child tends to be focused on his own needs, often unable to see the needs of others. As with all negative archetypes, you can learn to recognize their emergence and use them as a guide to alert one when one is in danger of falling into needy, self-absorbed attitudes and behavior [4].

In here, Kogito is one of the main characters. He is a novelist, journalist and a professor in his late fifties. Living in rural Japan with his wife and son. The story started by representing Kogito Choko as a lonely, introverted and vulnerable character. It showed even with his younger days up to when he was in his late fifties.

*“At times like that, he couldn't help seeing himself as a lonely, isolated symbol of the generation gap, eating modernity's dust” (p. 5)... Kogito was a bit of an outsider who didn't play that much with other children” (p.215)*

He thought that him being a novelist could help him connect to other people's lives through his work but he was wrong. It kept him more isolated from the world.

*“ As he did his novelist's work he had assumed that he was somehow connected with other people, but in reality he seemed to have no bond whatsoever with the people. That realization filled him with anxiety and frustration.” (p. 21)*

Kogito is in denial of his depression. He was either in solitary or in deep thoughts reflecting about his life. Different from the personality of his best friend, Goro Hanawa. More reason why he has been in a depressive state lately, is that he kept listening to the tapes Goro left him. He called this his Tagame sessions. Their friendship started back when they were still in Matsuyama during their younger years. When Goro Hanawa committed suicide, Kogito believed that his bestfriend finally went to the *Other Side* (as Goro calls life after death). The first time he listened to the tapes, emotions rushed and he was in deep despair after hearing Goro's voice through the tapes.

As Kogito listens to the tapes, he recalls their shared youth, their ambitions and artistic pursuits in postwar Japan. Since he was without a friend, he appreciated Goro's efforts to hang out with him and eventually build a strong relationship between them despite the differences in personality.

Aside from the fact that Kogito's wife, Chikasi, is a sister of Goro. They treat each other openly where they could throw around the walls when they are together. They are like brothers. They can share with each other even the most embarrassing moments of their lives. That is why the tragic passing of Goro clearly took a toll on his emotional and mental health.

The tapes trigger memories of conflicts, guilt and envy as Kogito felt overshadowed by Goro's success. However, Goro's tapes reveal deep admiration, resentment and dependence on Kogito. Since they are both busy in their respective fields, Kogito as a writer and Goro as a director. He kept making up theories in his head as if to compensate for the loss of his dear friend, and his neglect as his friend served as a dependence.

*“Nevertheless, he couldn't help thinking that the very concept of Tagame itself was a signal from Goro, a plea for help, and this ended up reviving the feeling he had, right after it happened, that he himself was to blame for Goro's death” (p. 358).*

Through those recordings, he would stay up in his study and naturally converse with Goro as if he were there with him at the moment. Whenever he wanted to say something

between Goro's tapes, he would press the pause button and answer. This worried Chikashi so much, as if she thought that Kogito was losing his mind talking with Goro through the tapes. Later, Chikasi encouraged Kogito to keep engaging with the tapes but also to move forward in life:

*“His heart swelled with emotion at the thought of being reunited with his midnight companion. His innocent enthusiasm was almost childlike.”(p. 270)*

Kogito is longing and dependent on Goro. He needs Kogito in his life so he holds on to the cassette tapes.

*“Wasn't it possible that the reason Kogito had been able to survive for hundred days without Tagame was because he always knew that the minute he got back to Tokyo he would be able to resume his conversations with Goro right away?” (p. 269)*

Despite the effort of keeping himself from the Tagame sessions, just as his wife wanted, he was craving for it and longed to hear the voice of his best friend.

*“And yet the reason he was involuntarily making his arm move like a feeler, as if he were a large insect hunting for a smaller quarry, was because after hundred days of solitary, silent quarantine, he simply longed to hear Goro's voice. He wanted, too, to go through the motions of whining and weeping a bit, as a kind of play-acting catharsis.” (p. 298)*

When he is back home from his Berlin trip, which he called his quarantine from his Tagame sessions, recovering from the death of his dear friend, he learned another grotesque experience from the past. By the end, Kogito realizes the tapes are not just about Goro's life and death but becomes part of his own identity.

The survival archetype Kogito Choko represents is the *Dependent Child*. He is in a way that even before they were growing up, he has always been dependent on Goro. He was able to experience things that he could not do alone since he has an introverted personality. So much dependency that he neglected Goro's emotional struggles. When Goro passed away, he was in deep emotional turmoil on how he could survive the tragedy. Through the Tagame tapes from Goro, he was able to cope and survive.

Kogito survived the emotional trauma by reflecting how hard life was on Goro without him realizing. He used Goro's experience and tragedy as a new lens to see a fresh perspective on life and to keep living. He comes to see his life and his role to a lost friend. He is a listening survivor who writes memories and grief. Rather than be shattered to doom, Kogito overcame the *Dependent Child* in him and transformed that dependence to better understand life.

B. Wounded Child: Kogito Choko in "Death by Water"  
(2009)

The Kogito in the second novel is a Wounded Child archetype that 'holds the memories of abuse, neglect, and other traumas that one has endured during childhood.' The past to the Wounded Child is a window that leads to bouts of depression, only more severe. Many people blame the relationship with their parents that created their Wounded Child, for instance, for all their subsequent dysfunctional relationships. On the positive side, the painful experiences of the Wounded Child often awaken a deep sense of compassion and a desire to help other Wounded Children. From a spiritual perspective, a wounded childhood cracks open the learning path of forgiveness [4].

In the novel, the story started during Kogito's life to adulthood. Kogito is in his seventies and leaves Tokyo to return to his native Shikoku village. He was still in university pursuing his degree in literature. He felt as if it was his calling to be a writer.

*"During the three years that followed I still didn't have a clear idea of what my chosen path would be, but I did try my hand at writing some short stories. To my surprise, one of those early efforts was published in Tokyo University's campus newspaper, and as a result of that success I felt ready to embark on a career as a novelist right out the gate." (p. 4)*

He hopes to confront the trauma of his father's wartime death, which occurred when his father drowned in a river. The circumstances have always been ambiguous to him either a scheming accident or a suicide?. Although he was often ridiculed by relatives for not having laid out a clear plan for his career. His relatives think that he would get nowhere as a writer. Just like in the novel *The Changeling*, Kogito Choko is a novelist known for his outspoken views on political and societal issues (p. 400).

When Kogito was very young, he had an imaginary friend whom he called Kogii. He cherished Kogii as if he were real. Despite being the only one to see Kogii, he enjoyed his company. In a poignant moment, when he lost his father, who drowned in the river, alongside with is Kogii, his imaginary friend, also drifted away. This brought him so much emotional trauma that he kept dreaming about it even when he was older. For him, his father was his model. He thought of him as a hero. And Kogii was his best friend, an entity whom he feels comfortable being around. So, when his father died after drowning and Kogii drifted away with the boat, he continuously dreamed about that night since he should have been in the same boat as well. It is in that moment that the 'inner child' in him was taken away by the untimely death of his father.

*"In the summer of 1945, shortly after our country lost the war, there was an unforgettable night when a storm raged through the forest and the river swelled and roared and overflowed the banks. Anyway, my father launched his little*

*boat into the tumultuous, storm-tossed river and then he drowned." (p. 51)*

And the idea was really never given closure until he became a writer and decided to write the *drowning novel* which is a story about the unfateful night that happened to his father. But even so, he could not comprehend what or how he should write it since he is torn between the idea of it being an imagination or a reality.

*"When I was drafting the prologue to my drowning novel, as an adult writer, I revisited that night. I was looking for ways to express what a momentous occurrence my father's drowning was and for our family, but in a fit of cowardice I wrote the whole scene as if it were the recollection of a dream." (p. 51).*

The present-day Kogito, after writing many novels, has had some of it has been revamped into a play specifically by a group of artists called *The Caveman Group*. They are like a performing group that turns novels into plays. This specific group asks for his help to collaborate with them in finishing the *drowning novel* and help them turn it into play. One of the novels that was turned into a play by them was his book entitled *The Day Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away*. It was a story about a heroic father who fought for his country till the last of his breath. When they were having the rehearsals. The thought of even remembering it gave him a heavy heart.

*"And as the chorus swelled I felt something beginning to stir in the deepest recesses of my heart, and I could not stop myself from joining in." (p. 61)*

When his mother passed away, his mother gave his sister Asa a red leather trunk which contained everything about his father. It was the last memorabilia his father had, which he brought with him after he drowned and was later recovered downstream, and the reason for his departure down the river that night. The trunk was kept by his mother for a long time. But when Kogito was back in Shikoku, her sister felt like it was time for him to find out what he was looking for all these years.

Finishing this novel is what he wants, not just for his career as a writer but also as a son who wants to move on and have closure with the incident that happened to his father, so he is prepared to open the trunk. He desperately looks for pieces of evidence that could connect him to the truth behind his father's death. The lack of closure was his trauma, and the only way he could cope with it was when he finished the *drowning novel*.

*"The entries didn't even touch upon the object of my current quest: information about my father's past, especially the events that transpired in the years leading up to and including 1945." (his younger self skimming through the notes of his mother." (p. 70)... In other words,*

for you, there was no clarity so there could be no absolution or closure, either. I think while Mother may have appeared to be systematically destroying your dreams, she was also trying to be true to her late husband.” (p. 94)

When he took possession of the red leather trunk, he immediately went through the things inside. Sadly, what he found was not something he hoped to see. The red leather trunk did not contain anything that could be an answer to his questions or even an inspiration for his *drowning novel* project.

He decided not to continue writing the *drowning novel*, but depression keeps coming back he was not able to finish the novel. He is tormented by the pain of the past. As he listens to stories from villagers and rereads old materials, Kogito comes to realize that the “truth” about his father’s death may never be knowable. Instead of a single revelation, he experiences a process of reinterpretation that the past is something fluid, elusive, and collective rather than fixed.

Kogito abandons the idea of writing a grand, conclusive masterpiece. He accepts that the past cannot be fully mastered but can be continually re-engaged with through storytelling, memory, and art. The novel ends hanging only an open recognition of uncertainty that life is not perfect.

In *Death by Water* (2009), Kogito Choko is a *Wounded Child*. Although parental figures did not physically wound Kogito Choko, he was emotionally tormented by the death of his father and the truth that was withheld from him. Not until his old age did, he learn that there was nothing more than the suicide of his father. Far from his expectations of a heroic father. His being a wounded child also led him to help another wounded character from the novel.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Kogito Choko is an introspective instrument of Kenzaburo Ōe’s deepening of the theme in his novels. This precious main character for Ōe assembles the message of the novel and how it reflects the inner child, wounded and needy. It is the beauty of his words that brings out the complexities of the post-war effect and loss of a family member; it is through putting a vulnerable character in his works that connects the realities of pain to the acknowledgement of one’s existence. Only Kenzaburo Ōe, intentionally or not, sketched carefully Kogito Choko to unpredictably predict the trajectory of the plots in his two novels and how characters react naturally [10].

Ōe turns increasingly inward, using Kogito Chōko as a literary alter ego. ‘Changeling’ (2000) meditates on friendship, suicide, and grief, drawing from the death of a dear friend Goro Hanawa (associated with the filmmaker

Junzo Itami, Ōe’s brother-in-law) [11]. In ‘Death by Water’ (2009) revisits the death of Kogito’s father, blurring fact and fiction while questioning the possibility of writing a ‘final masterpiece.’ Michael Molasky (2010) highlights how these novels operate as autofiction, intertwining memory, art, and aging [8].

True to say that authors are dependent on truth and their words bleed the sad blood that ink of the very soul of the literature they are writing. No author can write and master the past for memory is selective and the author can only reveal what he wants and conceal what he wants the world should not know. The author is clouded in the beginning phase of writing, waiting and weighing, then let the rain of ideas pour down, and when the sky is clear – he will only choose the story that is acceptable and bearable to his conscience.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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